NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN

Volume one

Pioneering and reform, 1869–1929

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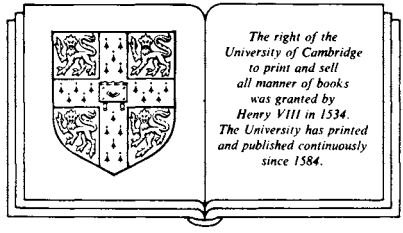

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THE FAMILY

'This is the excellent foppery of the world', cries Edmund in *King Lear*, after the Duke of Gloucester has attributed all manner of calamities to eclipses, 'that, when we are sick in fortune – often the surfeit of our own behaviour – we make guilty of our disasters the Sun, the Moon and the stars: as if we were villains by necessity; fools by heavenly compulsion; knaves, thieves, and treachers by spherical predominance, drunkards, liars, and adulterers, by an enforced obedience of planetary influence; and all that we are evil in, by a divine thrusting on. An admirable evasion of whoremaster man, to lay his goatish disposition to the charge of a star!'

Knowing his Shakespeare better than any Prime Minister of this century, Neville Chamberlain in the manner of his generation copied that passage into a commonplace book. No one would have been less disposed to swallow glib theories of background or heredity as determinants of character. Rather, he believed that a man is what he distils from reflection upon his own experience. The tests in which he came to trust were not those of worldly success or failure, but fortitude in adversity, ability to seek new solutions where old ones had failed, devotion to friends and family, zeal for public service.

The early life of any famous figure has an intrinsic interest; and in Neville Chamberlain's case the events of boyhood, youth and early manhood are of special importance to an understanding of his career. He was forty-two when first elected to the City Council of Birmingham, and until then had lived most of his life under his father's roof. He first held junior ministerial office at the age of fifty-three. He had received no formal training for political life, had not attended a university or desired to do so, and believed himself to have neither love nor natural aptitude for the business of national politics. He entered that arena still receptive, but with a character which forbade easy assimilation to political life.

His half brother Austen, after researches[1] into the family's history, judged their Chamberlain ancestors honest and upright people but rather dour. The line of descent could be traced from the time of Daniel Chamberlain, maltster of Lacock in Wiltshire, and even then, in the earlier part of the eighteenth century, his brother had been established as a confectioner in the city of London. Daniel's son is recorded in the archives of the Cordwainers' Company to have been made apprentice to John Hose, and by 1769 had become Master of the Company. Except for one brief span, the court of that Company included at least one Chamberlain from 1766 to 1873; members of the family were freemen or liverymen of the Company for two hundred years, from 1740 to Neville Chamberlain's death. Like other dissenters, this Unitarian family found itself cut off from much of the social and political life to which it would naturally have gravitated. The Chamberlains did well. Neville Chamberlain's grandfather, Joseph Chamberlain senior, Master of the Cordwainers' Company, had moved to the prosperous north London suburb of Highbury. About standards of behaviour and matters of money he held strict views. Asked for guidance about principles, he replied pithily, 'Tell the truth and pay cash.' He refused to let any of his children attend schools where corporal punishment was practised. However, his son Joseph dabbled in chemical experiments. One day he secured a stock of gunpowder and demolished his mother's garden. This fact could hardly be concealed from Joseph Chamberlain senior. Arriving on the scene of destruction he enquired how his son had been able to buy gunpowder, and on hearing that it had been done by borrowing twopence from a schoolfellow, beat him. Then the father said, 'Now, my boy, I have thrashed you not because you have blown up your mother's rockery, but because you have borrowed money which you have no means of repaying. In future when you require money you will come and borrow it from me.'[2] According again to Austen Chamberlain, his grandmother Caroline Harben and her sisters were remarkable women; from them Joseph Chamberlain derived his wit, social gifts and love of the beautiful. Leaving school at sixteen, he worked for his father in Milk Street, East London, where the family had kept their warehouse for three generations.

The well-formed mould was about to break, for when Joseph Chamberlain senior decided to take a stake in the screw-making business of John Sutton Nettlefold, a Unitarian to whom he was related by marriage, he probably calculated that the family might with luck augment its fortunes or at worst sustain a tolerable loss. He can hardly have imagined that this step – the new firm held, in Britain only, the patent for a machine which turned out screws more efficiently than any other – would make the family rich, enable his son to display dazzling talents and change their base of operations from London to Birmingham. It is often stated that the Chamberlains were long established and deep-entrenched in the life of the Midlands. In fact they had

made their living in London for many years, with some connections elsewhere; and they became a family who moved to Birmingham but retained many links with London. Not until 1863 did Joseph Chamberlain senior leave Islington for Moseley, then a village on the fringe of Birmingham. When the partnership with Nettlefold was established, he was asked how the family's interest would be looked after in the Midlands. Undeterred by the fact that his son, but eighteen years old, had never lived away from home, and with an endearing confidence in his children's ability, he replied 'Why, we'll send Joe.'

Birmingham's prosperity, to which the firm of Nettlefold and Chamberlain soon contributed notably, sprang from a rich diversity of trades. The city provided a market and shopping centre for a large population; it had numerous light industries; it manufactured or reworked every kind of metal. At the crossing place of many routes, Birmingham became the hub of railways radiating to London, the South coast, Bristol and the West, Wales, Manchester and Merseyside, Yorkshire and the industrial North East. More remarkably, for it stands nearly five hundred feet above the Midland plain, Birmingham had long been traversed by inland waterways, miracles of civil engineering.

This city, soon to become the fount of a distinctive civic gospel, had a bustling pride, sharpness, willingness to experiment, aptness in selling itself and its goods. Few excelled Joseph Chamberlain in that respect. Birmingham then had fewer great businesses than Manchester or Glasgow. The diversity of trades and reliance upon small concerns, many of which employed no more than a dozen or twenty, gave strength. The proportion of skilled to unskilled manpower stood high, and masters lived less remote from their men than in other industrial communities. Joseph Chamberlain seems to have known well all who worked for Nettlefold and Chamberlain in the early days.

Here he laid solid foundations. Birmingham provided him and later his sons with a secure political fortress for the better part of seventy years and Joseph Chamberlain formed convictions which did not change; only direct intervention, by the state in some instances but by municipal authorities in more, could destroy the slums, provide decent health, offer everyone an education. Birmingham was, and still is, a city in which some of the residential suburbs, with large houses and spacious gardens, lie no more than a mile and a half from the Bull Ring and New Street. At its heart a hundred years ago crowded a sordid jumble of alley-ways with open sewers. Joseph Chamberlain used to pass by all this in his daily journeys to and from work; and since he had a burning social conscience, no mean belief in his own capacity to order affairs, and abundant physical zest, he determined that he would not pass by on the other side.

Unmistakably master in his own business, Joseph Chamberlain gave

himself no airs and dealt with every man on level terms. Never too busy to listen to difficulties, he instructed the young at the Sunday School of the Church of the Messiah, and learned to value the sturdy independence of Birmingham people. When he had become famous, he found on his travels abroad that those whom he had taught, people who had worked for the firm, others with no affinity save that they hailed from the city, would come great distances to wish him well and say, 'I am a Birmingham man.' Chamberlain would add with pride, 'And never one appeals to me to do him a favour.'[3] When Lord Salisbury asked, 'Mr Gladstone was hated, but he was very much loved. Does anyone love Mr Chamberlain?' he put what he thought a rhetorical question.[4]

Religious influence in the civic life of Birmingham, already strong, developed as the nineteenth century passed. Perhaps the most celebrated nonconformist preacher of his day, Dr Dale, kept close personal and political ties with Chamberlain. The adult school movement within the city had a sweetening effect on the life of the community. Two groups of families, Quakers and Unitarians, had earned a deep influence there; excluded from many of their natural outlets and careers by law and prejudice, the dissenters had been attracted to commerce and later into manufacturing industry, so that the Kenricks, Beales, Martineaus, Nettlefolds, Rylands, Wilsons, Albrights, Cadburys, Lloyds and Chamberlains wielded a commercial and political power in Birmingham unrelated to their numbers. Theirs was an aristocracy, in the proper definition; to some degree an aristocracy of wealth and, as the generations passed, of inherited wealth; but an aristocracy with a high standard of intellectual refinement and public duty, far removed from that insolent plutocracy to which Mr Baldwin referred with disdain. Critics would have termed them incorruptible, industrious, self-confident, but also self-satisfied and somewhat unteachable.

These dissenting families identified Toryism with exclusive metropolitan society, landlords and landowners. They found in Liberalism a vehicle for their dislike of the Conservative party; and the easy relations between employers and men, the remarkable absence of embittered dispute in the Birmingham of those days, meant that the facts of industrial life there corresponded with the classless rhetoric of Liberalism. But the brand of Liberalism which Joseph Chamberlain espoused was of a positive and purposeful kind. He had little more use for the helpless detachment of laissez-faire than for the Conservative party. The Unitarians conceived of themselves, in sum, as radicals. 'They were great readers', wrote one of Neville Chamberlain's cousins, 'and from early days threw themselves into politics and social work. We always understood as children that as our lives had fallen in pleasant places it behoved us all the more to do what we could to improve the lot of those less happily placed.'[5]

The Unitarians of Birmingham, especially in the Chamberlain and Kenrick families, inter-married to the point where cousins became one large clan. Three times brother and sister wed sister and brother, so that 'the Family' developed into a source of comfort, providing an accepted code and exciting companionship, and of weakness, for there was no call to stray beyond its bounds. On the Kenrick side, two brothers had married two first cousins, of the Paget family. Joseph Chamberlain's first wife, Harriet, was the daughter of one brother, and his second wife, Florence, daughter of the other. Chamberlain's sister married Harriet's brother. His favourite brother Arthur married the twin sister of Florence Kenrick. Thus the four streams of Harben, Paget, Kenrick and Chamberlain, all with strong traditions of nonconformity, flowed together.

Joseph Chamberlain's first marriage proved as happy as it was short. 'You must not laugh at Joe's gardening', his wife wrote to her mother-in-law. 'I am going to make him a real gardener.' In this way she introduced into the life of a complete townsman the chief recreation, apart from talk and travel, of his later life. Long afterwards, reviewing his glorious collection of orchids, Joseph Chamberlain said reflectively, 'I don't know after all that any flowers ever gave me more pleasure than the first six pennyworth of red daisies that I bought in the Market Hall and carried home to plant with your mother in our little garden in the Harborne Road.'[6]

Their daughter Beatrice was born in 1862. Eighteen months later, Harriet Chamberlain died in childbirth but their son Austen survived. The two children with their desolated father moved to Berrow Court, Edgbaston, home of Harriet's father, Archibald Kenrick. By her dying wish, her sister Caroline looked after the children, with devotion. At Berrow Court Joseph Chamberlain kept his own sittingroom and saw his friends independently, the practice of working into the early hours, which he followed for the rest of his active life, began at this time, when toil 'took the place of sleep that would not come, as his only relief from sorrow'.[7] Many years later, Austen chanced to say about a friend of his father, who had been left a widower with an only child, 'He doesn't seem to care much for the boy, or to see much of him.' Only when Joseph Chamberlain replied, 'You must remember that his mother died when the boy was born' did Austen perceive what had been so carefully concealed from him until then, that in early years he had embodied the first great tragedy of his father's life. Throughout their childhood Joseph Chamberlain never talked to Austen or Beatrice about his first wife. Reserve, restraint, discipline, were part of the family code. Hardened man of business and lusty political fighter, Chamberlain could not trust himself to speak of her and retain his composure. Not until Austen was twenty-five, and Joseph Chamberlain himself about to marry for the third time, could he bear to venture on this ground. 'Do you know, Sir, that this is the first time you have

ever spoken to me about my mother?' Austen asked. 'Yes, I know. Until happiness came again into my life, I did not dare to – and even now I can't do it without the tears coming into my eyes.'[8]

A bright and bubbling child, Beatrice raced through her books and remarked mournfully to a visitor about her baby brother, 'Austen has no con-ver-sa-tion.'[9] He, with more delicate health and less energy, was from the start fond of his sister and perhaps a little overshadowed by her. By this time Joseph Chamberlain senior and his wife had finally abandoned North London and had set up home near Moseley. The children would stay with their grandparents at Moor Green Hall from time to time and Austen recalled that grandfather Chamberlain seemed grave but kind. He had the firm of Smith and Chamberlain, brassfounders, and would set off with a case of sandwiches to walk across the fields to Moseley, whence he took the omnibus or a trap into town. He pressed on his grandchildren as he had done on his son that they should never borrow money. Discovering during a seaside holiday that they had begged twopence from their nurse to buy little boats, he explained patiently that they must at once pay off their debt and gave them sixpence to do it.

Joseph Chamberlain's second wife, Florence Kenrick, is recorded to have been a quiet and retiring child, attending to her school work conscientiously, taking her share in the household duties of a large family, keeping 'most steadily in view the improvement of her character and the cultivation of her mind. She showed always ready help and sympathy and was to be relied upon.' With elder sisters playing the more active part in the running of the household at Maplebank, Edgbaston, she had freedom to read extensively and pursue a fondness for natural history. She taught each week in the Sunday school. Florence's letters to Joseph Chamberlain during their engagement breathe her apprehension at the task she had undertaken. No more than twenty, she felt her responsibilities to Beatrice and Austen, keen to fill a mother's place for them, but diffident of her power to do it. Being a younger child, she had had little opportunity to form a confidence in her own judgment. Although these doubts proved groundless she did not readily shake off an anxious feeling. Joseph Chamberlain, son of Joseph Chamberlain, brassfounder, married Florence Kenrick, daughter of Timothy Kenrick, ironfounder, in June 1868, nearly five years after the death of Harriet. That loss had left him with a sense of insecurity and a dread of possibilities too full of pain to dwell upon, which cast the only shadow upon their happiness.[10]

In her new station Florence Chamberlain blossomed. She treated Beatrice and Austen as her own children, became interested in public affairs, ran the household, remained on affectionate terms with her parents and sisters, liked walking, skating and riding, helped a number of charities, studied botany

and physiology and French. The surviving pictures of Florence Chamberlain show a woman of slim build, serious expression, and finely moulded features, her hair rather severely dressed, with a parting in the middle and a tight bun. In little over five years, she bore four children; Neville, Ida, Hilda and Ethel.

Joseph Chamberlain's entry into the political life of Birmingham more or less coincided with his second marriage. Shortly after Neville's birth, he received an invitation to stand for the Town Council and accepted with Florence's glad agreement. As the span of his concerns widened, he found in her, perhaps unexpectedly in a man so assured and successful, a guide with whom he could discuss his political business freely and from whose counsel he could profit. She rejoiced in his triumphs and offered sympathy in occasional failures. 'I see', he wrote a few years later,

> how the path has been smoothed for me by her unselfish affection, and how much strength I have gained from the just confidence I had reposed in the judgment and devotion she has displayed in the part reserved for her. It is easy to give time and thought and labour to public works while the mind is relieved from any anxiety about home duties and all the responsibilities of life are shared by a real helpmate and companion.
>
> I am glad to think that this busy life brought with it its own reward and satisfied the aspirations of a mind which would have felt existence incomplete, if its interests had been confined to a narrow circle of selfish or simply personal aims.[11]

The firm had flourished mightily; Nettlefold and Chamberlain was the largest concern of its kind in Birmingham, with a substantial export trade growing by efficiency and amalgamations. Most of the company's documents from those days have not survived. There is however a run of correspondence in 1870 from Chamberlain to Nettlefold which is no doubt typical.[12] The letters are written in a smart, sloping and beautifully legible script. Chamberlain's zeal and precision leap from every page, with references to messages and telegrams flying back and forth; he writes day after day. It is not hard to see why people said, 'You need to get up very early to outwit Joe Chamberlain', but a little surprising to discover that as a young man he made public speeches with difficulty and used to say that he could deliver only one a month, because it took two weeks to get ready and another two weeks to recover. For a formal occasion, he would always prepare a text, written in a microscopic hand. He would search long for a theme, saying that every good speech must have one, before refining the first draft to notes of salient words or phrases. In later life, he would think nothing of spending three or five days' labour for a set speech to some great meeting. Before the occasion he sat, like many another great orator, silent and preoccupied. As the parlourmaid once remarked to Mrs Chamberlain, 'No, Mum, it's not what he says, but what he looks!'[13]

Joseph Chamberlain was then accounted an extreme radical, notorious for the vehemence of his language, unsparing in his attitude towards the Church of England, and towards the monarchy not always respectful. Hostesses in Birmingham listened astonished as he talked undiluted radical politics at social gatherings.[14] In this phase of his career, Chamberlain injected new ingredients of the first importance into English politics: he showed what satisfaction could be given by a vigorous municipality to local aspirations, because it could move more swiftly and responsively than any central authority; he organised his political support most thoroughly, for local and national elections alike.

Chamberlain remarked, 'There is no nobler sphere for those who have not the opportunity of engaging in Imperial politics than to take part in municipal work, to the wise conduct of which they owe the welfare, the wealth, the comfort and the lives of 400,000 people.'[15] He had been a member of the Council only four years when elected Mayor. To say 'In twelve months by God's help the town shall not know itself' betokened no empty promise, and the words 'by God's help' represented no ritual genuflection. By now he was wealthy enough to retire from business, a week or two before his thirty-eighth birthday. The 'Chamberlain' disappeared from Nettlefold and Chamberlain, and some £600,000 was paid for the family's interest. He had multiplied perhaps thirtyfold the sum risked by his father. The proceeds being strictly divided, Joseph Chamberlain himself received about £120,000. We should have to reckon this nowadays as a sum of several millions, and by the standards of a century later the rate of taxation on income from investments stood so low that an unimaginably large sum would be required to produce the same return in real value. At all events, Joseph Chamberlain and his large family lived well on the proceeds.

His memoir of Florence[16] records that she managed admirably the extra duties of his new public position. They pondered all his plans for the city's government. She arranged material which would be useful to him with an index, so that facts could be quickly sought out, and would often accompany him to public meetings. The articles which he began to publish at this time in the *Fortnightly Review*, partly through his friendship with the editor John Morley, passed through the sieve of her criticism. She enjoyed the society of the public figures who stayed at Southbourne, the home to which they had moved in Edgbaston, and looked forward to the possibility of a life in London if Joseph Chamberlain should exchange local for national politics. Morley, excellently qualified to judge, remarked that Chamberlain read more widely than most men in public life, with no bounds to his interest in art, modern history, and imaginative letters 'with all that they import in politics'; he had drawn around him at Birmingham a remarkable circle, and conversation in the library at Southbourne radiated activity of mind and a

discussion of theoretical views, but in terms of practical life, together with an atmosphere of strenuous and disinterested public spirit. We need not dispute that all this rose 'far superior for effective purpose to the over-critical air and tone of the academic common room'.[17]

Florence Chamberlain expected a fifth child early in 1875. Her husband recorded that she had never been very strong and wore a delicate look which sometimes made him anxious, 'but her spirit was indomitable and she did not know what idleness was'. Although twelve years older, he hardly noticed the gap and Florence Chamberlain would say with a laugh that she had grown to his years. 'I think her judgment made her seem older than she was, while her love and brightness made me younger in her presence.'[18]

Chamberlain had to preside at a meeting in the Town Hall on Tuesday, 9 February. His wife had expected to accompany him but reluctantly decided to stay at home. So little was trouble anticipated that the Chamberlains had invited John Morley and another visitor to stay at Southbourne. Towards the end of the proceedings, the Mayor was handed a note from his wife saying she feared the baby might come early and asking him to put off the visitors. She had ensured that this letter should not be delivered until the proceedings were nearly over, lest her husband be made apprehensive. Chamberlain apologised to his guests, returned home and found his wife poorly but cheerful.

By the next day she appeared better and he had to go off to London on public business. Returning late on the Thursday night he thought Florence rather depressed; but she said bravely, 'I am glad of this for one thing – it will be all over for you to have your Easter holyday' (the word was always pronounced and spelt thus in the family). On the Saturday evening Joseph Chamberlain brought the two elder children, Neville and Ida, to say goodnight. She kissed them both with more than usual earnestness; and shortly before midnight the child was born. There seemed no cause for alarm, yet the shadow of Harriet's death had never left Joseph Chamberlain's mind. He asked the doctor to remain. On the Sunday afternoon, Florence Chamberlain fainted and died. The child followed a few hours later.

Joseph Chamberlain wrote an appreciation of Florence for her children, as he had done after the death of his first wife. Reading the one melancholy paper before composing the other, he reflected upon the resemblance between the characters of Harriet and Florence Kenrick and found the same devotion to high standards of duty, the same spirit of helpfulness, cheerfulness and innocent enjoyment. The second life now prematurely closed seemed a confirmation and prolongation of the first; so that he could hardly distinguish between the memories which each had left. Neville Chamberlain in his turn, writing a similar memoir forty years later,

explained to his children that their grandfather 'under an exterior that for many years was rather hard and cold, concealed intensely strong feelings. His love for my mother was not I think passionate – he had himself too much under control for that – but it was so profound that when she died it destroyed all his pleasure in life and altered his whole being.'[19]

At this hinge of his life Joseph Chamberlain lost faith in organised religion. Unlike Beatrice and Austen, too young to remember their mother but brought up by their aunt with many stories about her, Florence Chamberlain's four children were not allowed to feel that they had known her, and only Neville, the eldest, retained even faint recollections. His sister Ethel resembled her mother so closely that Joseph Chamberlain could scarcely look at her without becoming tearful. Almost six at the time of his mother's death, Neville recalled sitting with the Mayor's gold chain of office round his neck; the rustle of his mother's silk dress when he and Ida went to say their prayers with her in the evenings; and a holiday in Wales. Once his father spoke about Florence, when he gave Neville and Ida some of her letters, together with his own memoir and an appreciation by her sister Emily. He said very slowly, under stress of deep emotion, 'I think she was as perfect as a woman can be.'[20] Thereafter he always took holidays abroad, not wishing to be surrounded by poignant reminders.

Florence Chamberlain's death fell at the high noontide of Chamberlain's celebrity as Mayor. He threw himself with still greater zeal into that work. The rumour ran one day that he had been killed in an accident. 'Unfortunately', Chamberlain recorded, 'it wasn't true, and the friends who came to look at my remains found me presiding at a Gas committee.'[21] His own mother died in that autumn of 1875, only six or seven months after Florence. Neville judged that because of these griefs the whole period had become too painful to his father to discuss afterwards; he withdrew a good deal into himself and was never expansive in conversation with his children about his public career.

Perhaps this was the only time in the nineteenth century when one man could transform the administration of a city. The political conditions made it feasible; in Birmingham a powerful current favoured constructive action by the municipality; Joseph Chamberlain had executive talents amounting to genius, allied with rare powers of persuasion, negotiation and exposition. By comparison with the urban monsters of the twentieth century, Birmingham remained small. The first citizen could make his influence felt in every branch of the administration, and create a new conception of the city's civilising duty.

Neville, following his father thirty-five years after the close of his mayoralty, found the whole system still imbued with the Chamberlain tradition.[22] By boldness, originality and vitality, obstacles were made to

move. Joseph Chamberlain's pride in his place of adoption knew no limit. He believed Britain the best country in the world, and Birmingham its heart and epicentre. He spoke affectionately of Birmingham people's quickness in the uptake, loyalty, sense of honour and honesty, gift for administration, skill in craftsmanship and enterprise in manufacture. His were creative gifts of the highest order; later to be exercised upon a much wider stage, but perhaps never to greater effect. Chamberlain and the nonconformist ministers upon whose ideas he had drawn, and whose part in creating a sympathetic climate made this outstanding mayoralty possible, placed service in local government upon a new pedestal of dignity and honour. Except in the immediate aftermath of his wife's death, he was always excellent company. Loving to dress in a dashing style, he caused a sensation at a public meeting in Birmingham by arriving in a sealskin top-coat. Once he became fascinated by the culture of orchids, he invariably appeared with a freshly plucked bloom in his buttonhole.

The appearance, administration, health and sanitation of the city were transformed. Chamberlain pressed for the purchase by the city of the gas undertakings and when asked whether he would in his private capacity think it a good bargain, replied with aplomb that if the Council would be good enough to let him run the enterprise, he would be able to retire in a few years with a snug fortune. Thus the Mayor exercised what he called sagacious audacity. Under his impetus, the Council brought from the Elan Valley a soft Welsh water admirably suited to the city's metal processes. Before leaving office for the House of Commons, he wrote 'I think I have now almost completed my municipal programme and may sing *nunc dimittis*. The Town will be parked, paved, assized, marketed, gas-and-watered and *improved* – all as a result of three years' active work.'[23] The deep roots which he had put down in Birmingham, his ability to convey a sincere interest in the hard lives of working people, his fighting spirit, had already made Chamberlain a legend. In the next thirty years, Birmingham became far and away the most important stronghold of Liberal Unionism. In effect, the city changed its political allegiance at Chamberlain's behest and, as Churchill says, laughed at charges of inconsistency.[24] Even at the election of 1935, the last to be fought by his sons, every seat in Birmingham was held by the Conservatives and Liberal Unionists. This phenomenon did not result from forces which by the later nineteenth century had become irresistible in great industrial cities, for nothing comparable occurred in Manchester or Glasgow or Sheffield; rather, it sprang from a combination of the circumstances of Birmingham with the exceptional talents of the Chamberlains and their many allies.

After their mother's death, Neville and the three girls were placed in the care of their Aunt Lina.[25] She looked after them tenderly for three years.